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ABSTRACT

The occupational choices of second graders were studied, 5 years after some initial studies had determined the sex stereotyped nature of their choices. The sample of 266 male and 226 female second graders included children from upper and lower socioeconomic strata. Children were asked what they wanted to be when they grew up and had to indicate their preferences among 17 job categories. Teaching was the choice of 77 children. Homemaker was an unpopular choice, with only one male choosing that career. Students, especially males, still selected sex stereotyped careers, although females selected a wider variety of jobs than did those in 1983 or 1971. More males chose police officer and firefighter, while more females chose careers in teaching, nursing, and entertaining. The most androgynous choices were lawyer, doctor, and service jobs. Two tables present the children's responses. (SLD)

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ANOTHER LOOK AT SECOND GRADERS OCCUPATIONAL CHOICES:
FIVE YEARS LATER

In 1971, William Looft asked a group of second grade students, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" The girls named only three choices: teacher, nurse and housewife/mother, while boys named over 18 possible future careers, with football player and policeman as the most frequently nominated. The Looft study was replicated in 1983 with similar results, however, only one student in the sample wanted to be a teacher (George & Schaer, 1983).

Since then, numerous studies have been conducted in the area of sex differences in occupational choice, using a plethora of approaches.

One study had primary students decide which doll (male or female) did a better job at a particular career. The children had sex stereotypical notions concerning competence in occupational roles, with older children adhering more rigidly to the stereotypes (Cann & Haight, 1983). The top three male occupational choices were doctor, police officer, truck driver, as compared with the top three female occupations, secretary, teacher and dancer.

Another researcher used the Occupational Role Stereotype Scale (ORSS) comprised of photographs of occupational roles (Barnhart, 1983) for an interview with third and fifth grade students. Results indicated that most of the 18 occupational roles received traditional female or male role-typed judgement. Leading roles for males were firefighter,

garbage collector, and truck driver, while leading roles for females were homemaker, secretary, and nurse.

A longitudinal study revealed that the career goals for a group of girls between the ages of 8 and 13 was influenced by such factors as family background, parental sex typing, IQ, and school achievement (Sandberg, et al., 1987). The Sandberg study was conducted in two phases, beginning when the subjects were in elementary school and ending during adolescence. Findings from this study indicated that as girls got older, the diversity of career choices increased. The females who aspired toward careers in medicine, mathematics and science had higher IQ's and grade point averages than those girls choosing to be either nurses or elementary school teachers. Also, the level of parental educational attainment was higher among those females who chose non-traditional jobs. It was also found that a greater proportion of the "pioneers" (non-traditional career aspirants) considered themselves to be "tomboys" throughout childhood.

Using Kohlberg's (1966) developmental theory as the basis for an investigation, O'Keefe and Hyde (1983) found that even those young children who were not "gender-stable" would choose sex stereotyped occupations, which supports the social learning theorists' notion that boys who are given fire trucks and girls who are given dolls to play with are learning stereotyped expectations for future roles.

Teachers also hold stereotyped expectations for students occupational aspirations (Moore & Johnson, 1983). In this study, data assessed by discriminant analysis indicated teacher expectations for females cluster around traditional sex-segregated occupational categories, specifically the white-collar/clerical occupations, while males were significantly more likely to be assigned to unskilled laborer, skilled worker, and managerial categories.

One intervention effort to offset the influence of stereotyped career expectations of parents and teachers was the use of role models in non-stereotyped occupations (e.g., a female doctor, mechanic, & pilot and a male nurse, secretary, & flight attendant) who talked with elementary students about their careers (George & Schaer, 1982). Pre and post tests results showed that following intervention, girls made more androgynous vocational choices, while boys chose only accepted male vocations.

In yet another study, it was found that a group of third grade students were influenced by a role model in deciding who could become a school principal, a male or female (Hageman & Gladding, 1983). One of the schools involved in this investigation had just replaced a male principal with a new female principal. The other school had had a male principal for over 10 years. The students at the school with the female principal held the viewpoint that both females and males could become a school principal, in

contrast to the opinion of the students at the other school.

The present study replicates Looft's (1971) and George and Schaer's (1983) studies by taking another look at second graders' occupational choices, five years later, to determine if boys and girls are still selecting future occupations which are sex stereotyped. The added dimension of socioeconomic status of males and females was investigated.

Subjects: Included in the sample of 492 second grade students, were: upper socio-economic males, 124; and females, 113. Lower socio-economic males were 142 and females, 113. Socio-economic status was determined by school neighborhood demographics and number of students on free/reduced lunches.

Method: Second grade students responded to a questionnaire asking "What do you want to be when you grow up?" At the top of each survey, students were asked to check if they were a boy or girl. Teachers read the survey to the class and gave students directions to "guess" for spelling, not to ask any questions out loud.

Results: Chi Squares for both occupational choice by sex (Chi Sq.= 207.9, df = 16, $p < .001$) and by socio-economic status (Chi Sq. = 35.5, df = 16, $p = .003$) were significant at the tested .05 level. Table 1 shows the number of males and females responding to each of the 17 career choices. Table 2 shows the number of lower and upper socio-economic status responding to each of the 17 career choices.

Interesting comparisons to findings of the study five years earlier were that 77 children today chose teaching careers whereas in the previous study only one out of the 151 subjects chose to become a teacher. Homemaker again was an unpopular choice as only one male chose that career.

Discussion: Results of this study show that second grade students, especially males, are still selecting sex stereotyped future careers. The females in the present study, as compared with the Looft study in 1971 and the George & Schaer study in 1983, selected a wider variety of job possibilities. Also, a significantly greater number of females than males aspired to become teachers. As noted earlier, the fact that such a large number of students aspired to become teachers is a distinct change from the previous study, which indicates that the teaching profession may be regaining status, although more lower than upper SES students named teaching as a career choice. More upper than lower socio-economic level male students chose sportsplayer as a future career. Perhaps the high salaries paid in these fields influenced this choice. Also, more males chose sex stereotyped jobs of becoming a police officer and firefighter while more females selected careers in teaching, nursing, and entertaining. The most androgynous career choices across categories were lawyer, doctor, and service jobs.

In summary, it appears that although females are naming more choices for future careers, larger numbers of males and females still aspire toward sex stereotyped occupations.

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TABLE 1

CHI SQUARE SUMMARY DATA FOR GENDER DIFFERENCES IN CAREER CHOICE OF SECOND GRADE STUDENTS

CATEGORY	RANK	SEX MALE 1	FEMALE 2	RAW TOTAL	PERCENT
TEACHER	1	8	69	77	15.7
SPORTSPLAYER	2	57	7	64	13.0
DOCTOR	3	36	27	63	12.8
POLICE	4	43	5	48	9.8
NURSE	5	0	28	28	5.7
OTHER	6	17	11	28	5.7
SERVICE JOB	7	17	9	26	5.3
LAWYER	8	13	11	24	4.9
VETERINARIAN	9	7	16	23	4.7
ENTERTAINER	10	4	18	22	4.5
I DON'T KNOW	11	16	3	19	3.9
SCIENTIST	12	14	4	18	3.7
FIREFIGHTER	13	14	0	14	2.8
PILOT	14	12	1	13	2.6
ARTIST	15	4	8	12	2.4
MODEL	16	0	7	7	1.4
ASTRONAUT	17	4	2	6	1.2
COLUMN TOTAL		266 54.1	226 45.9	492	100.0

CHI SQUARE	D.F.	SIGNIFICANCE
207.98161	16	0.0000